

NCA  
VOC FOR PGM/FN  
BACKGROUND NO. 5-6245  
CHARLES WEISS/TEHERAN

NOVEMBER 7, 1978

IRAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT

ANNCR:

THE SHAH'S DECISION THIS WEEK TO BRING IN THE ARMY TO RUN THE GOVERNMENT HAS ACHIEVED THE IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE OF PUTTING A STOP TO LAWLESSNESS IN TEHERAN. THE NEXT STEPS ARE NOT SO CLEAR. CHARLES WEISS HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM THE IRANIAN CAPITAL.

VOICE:

OBSERVERS HERE SAY THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE SHAH'S ACTION NOW DEPENDS ON WHETHER IT WILL WIN THE SUPPORT OF THE SHIITE MOSLEM CLERGY OR AT LEAST THEIR TACIT ACQUIESCENCE. THEY WERE THE ONES WHO CALLED THE MOBS OUT INTO THE STREET AND IT'S ASSUMED ONLY THEY CAN PREVENT A RECURRENCE OF THE EVENTS THAT LED UP TO THE ARMY TAKEOVER. IT IS FELT THAT IF THE MOVE TO RESTORE LAW AND ORDER IS ACCEPTED VOLUNTARILY, AND IF THE ARMY HALTS THE WAVE OF STRIKES WITHOUT RESORT TO FORCE, THE LOCAL CLERGY MAY DISASSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM THE EXTREMIST "DOWN WITH THE SHAH" STANCE TAKEN BY THEIR ACKNOWLEDGED LEADER, THE EXILED AYATULLAH KHOMEINY. FOR THE TIME BEING THEY HAVE ADOPTED A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE. ON THE OTHER HAND AYATULLAH KHOMEINY TOLD THE WASHINGTON POST MONDAY THAT HE NOW CALLED ON THE ARMY TO ASSIST IN OVERTHROWING THE PAHLAVI DYNASTY. THERE ARE REPORTS MEANWHILE, OF CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION AMONG SECULAR OPPOSITION LEADERS WITH THE WAY THE SHAH PUT THINGS WHEN HE ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. THEY POINT OUT THE STRESS THE MONARCH LAID ON THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF THE NEW REGIME AND HIS ADMISSION OF PAST MISTAKES. NOT ONLY DID THE CONTENT OF THE SHAH'S SPEECH WIN PRAISE. SO DID HIS STYLE OF DELIVERY

WHICH WAS FAR FROM THE IMPERIAL APPROACH THEY HAD BECOME USED TO. FOR EXAMPLE, HE USED THE PRONOUN "I" INSTEAD OF THE ROYAL "WE". THE SECULAR OPPOSITION LEADERS APPEARS TO WANT TO SEE HOW THINGS DEVELOP BEFORE PUBLICLY TURNING THEIR BACK ON THE AYATULLAH.

IT IS CLEAR THAT FREE ELECTIONS THE SHAH PROMISED FOR JUNE CANNOT BE HELD SO LONG AS THERE IS MARTIAL LAW. AND UNTIL THERE IS A RETURN TO THE NORMAL DAY-TO-DAY ROUTINE, MARTIAL LAW IS GOING TO REMAIN. INFORMED OBSERVERS IN TEHERAN SAY IT WILL TAKE ANOTHER MONTH AT LEAST TO SEE WHETHER STABILITY HAS BEEN RESTORED TO THE POINT WHERE CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION CAN TAKE OVER AGAIN. THEY CITE THE TENTH DAY OF THE MOSLEM MONTH OF MUHARREM AS A CRUCIAL TEST. THIS IS A DAY OF MOURNING FOR HUSSEIN, A GRANDSON OF THE PROPHET MOHAMMED, AND THE MAN WHO FOUNDED THE SHIITE SECT TO WHICH OVER NINETY PERCENT OF THE IRANIAN POPULATION BELONGS. IT IS A DAY OF SELF-FLAGELLATION AND RELIGIOUS AWAKENING. THIS YEAR IT FALLS ON DECEMBER ELEVENTH.

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WJL/RD